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USPS NEWS HARDCOPY

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Postal reform before Congress

On the agenda: postal reform. The U.S. Congress is taking a close look at the issue once again. Congressman John McHugh opened the debate by saying, "The Postal Service is too important an institution to our economy to await the full brunt of the crisis that is clearly on our doorstep." Among the first to testify at a recent congressional hearing on the subject — Board of Governors Chairman David Fineman and PMG Jack Potter.

Fineman said the old assumption that mail volume growth will support an ever-growing delivery network isn't valid anymore. He said the time is now to provide USPS with new tools to manage its business. "We are reaching the limits of the current opportunities available to us," Fineman said. "We can't keep pulling rabbits out of our financial hat."

"The need for change may not become apparent ... until the inflexibilities of our dated business model begin to affect service and the price of postage."

— PMG Jack Potter

Potter said the "litmus test" for postal legislative reform is providing management with the flexibility to manage. He added that this must be balanced by effective, independent oversight.

Potter says the Transformation Plan is taking USPS in the right direction — increasing productivity and bringing service performance and customer satisfaction to their highest levels ever. But these successes, he cautions, have masked the need for postal reform. "The need for change may not become apparent ... until the inflexibilities of our dated business model begin to affect service and the price of postage." He said: "We can't afford to let this happen."

Potter agrees with the five reform principles announced earlier this year by the White House — implementation of best practices, transparency, flexibility, accountability and financial self-sufficiency. But he said a sixth principle should be added, "commitment to a strong collective bargaining process."



USPS Board of Governors Chairman David Fineman (above) and PMG Jack Potter (below) discuss postal reform before U.S. lawmakers.



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■ Arlington, VA, Letter Carrier Mike

Yummit noticed an 88-year-old customer hadn't picked up the previous day's mail. With a neighbor's help, Yummit entered the woman's home and discovered she had fallen. His quick action helped get necessary medical attention to the customer.

■ Odessa, TX, Letter Carrier Marcos Zuniga

suspected something was wrong when he saw uncollected mail and signs of a break-in at a customer's house. A neighbor informed him the

residents were away on a trip. Zuniga immediately notified police who apprehended the burglar.

■ Windom, MN, Letter Carrier Crista Stahl

was walking to her LLV when a group of boys raced past her, chasing another boy. The group caught and then beat the boy. Stahl ran to a customer's house and called police. She parked her LLV where it would protect the boy from getting hit by a vehicle and stayed with him until the police arrived.

QUOTABLE

"The time is now to provide us with the new tools to allow us to manage this \$68 billion service the right way, like a business, with our eye on the bottom line."

Board of Governors Chairman David Fineman

Walking on thin ice (thick, too)

The iceman has indeed cometh. From the Great Plains to the East Coast, folks have been battling the elements in recent weeks, especially snow and ice. It's been treacherous for USPS employees carrying out their appointed rounds. Remember to follow some simple safety rules:

- Proper footwear heads the list. Wear shoes or boots with soles that provide traction — rubber or neoprene composite. Avoid plastic or leather shoes.
- Give yourself plenty of time to get where you're going.

- If you can't avoid walking on ice, take short steps or shuffle for stability. Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over your feet as much as possible.

- Are there any railings or supports that you can use when walking over slippery spots? Be sure to use them.

There's still a lot of winter yet to come. Practice safety every day.

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